

# WWF FOOD SYSTEMS FELLOWSHIP

*Food is Local: The social, cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions of food systems and transformation at the national level*

**Deadline: December 18, 2024**

11:59 PM US Eastern Time

Addressing the urgent need for environmental sustainability while ensuring equitable distribution of food and optimal nutrition will require integrated strategies to understand how the food systems, people, and nature interact at a varying scope and scale. Food systems at local, regional, and global levels are complex, ranging from traditional subsistence to modernized approaches. Global-level analyses can mask important differences in food systems around the world and the individual actions that countries can take to transform their food system for people and the planet. Food is the leading cause of environmental degradation and poor human health and a better understanding of how food system transformation will play out in countries around the world is urgently needed to tackle climate change, restore biodiversity, and improve human health for all persons.

**Food systems are a major cause of global problems, but they can also be a leading solution to many of the crises we face today.**

WWF is working with diverse stakeholders at the grassroots and global level by building partnerships to transform food systems that connect people and nature, ensure food security and safety, support livelihoods, and sustain species and habitats for future generations. This fellowship aims to deliver on WWF's long-standing commitment to strengthen capacity in-country by supporting the aspiring and experienced researchers, practitioners and leaders to pursue graduate-level studies (master's and PhD) geared towards research that cultivates a better understanding of the place-based nature of food systems and transformation. Fellows will also have an opportunity to join the expansive global community of EFN alumni to enable knowledge exchange and collective success.



## Eligible Countries

**This fellowship is open to nationals of eligible countries within WWF-US priority areas.**

- Belize
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chile
- Colombia
- Dem. Republic of Congo
- Ecuador
- Fiji
- French Guiana
- Gabon
- Guatemala
- Guyana
- Honduras
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Laos
- Madagascar
- Malaysia
- Mozambique
- Myanmar
- Namibia
- Nepal
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Republic of Congo
- Suriname
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Vietnam
- Zambia



## Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet all of the following criteria to be eligible.

- You must be a citizen and legal permanent resident of an eligible country.
- You must preferably have at least two years of conservation-related work or research experience.
- You must have a demonstrated commitment to working in conservation in an eligible country.
- You must be enrolled in, admitted to, or have applied to a master's or PhD program anywhere in the world.
- You must plan to begin your studies no later than January 2026.
- You must contact EFN if you are a WWF employee, consultant, or previous EFN grant recipient to determine eligibility.
- You must submit all required documents by the application deadline (**December 18, 2024**).

## Focus Areas

The fellowship aims to bridge academic excellence and conservation practice and policy to provide hands-on experiences and learning opportunities in the food systems and transformation journey. The proposed research topics may cover a wide range of the following themes, but examples are not limited to this list:

- Human dimensions in food systems and transformation: equitable social and economic benefits to stakeholders, traditional and indigenous knowledge and culture in food systems, gender dimensions, equity, and inclusion in food systems, and community-based transformational leadership linked to food systems.
- Climate change: climate-resilient food systems, adaptation and mitigation strategies, and diversification of food systems including agroecological practices as nature-positive production.
- Governance and policy pathways: public policy and governance in food systems, national food safety and security, and nutrition security, food systems in achieving Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plans, and global biodiversity goals.
- Technology and Innovation: role of technology and innovation to tackle food systems challenges, capacity, and data in transforming food systems.
- Entrepreneurship, finance solutions and mechanisms: access to nutrition and affordable food, markets and investments, incentives, value chain development, sustainable markets, and sustainable practices to enhance desired socio-economic outcomes.

**Proposals should adequately address the following key questions:**

- How will/does the proposed work connect the nexus of food, with people and nature?
- Why is this research needed now? How does your current/proposed research address a food systems problem?
- What transdisciplinary approaches, experiential learning, and applied research approaches will your proposed research apply?
- What is the applicability and feasibility of the proposed research in your country? Would you be working with stakeholders in the implementation of projects related to your research topic?



- How can the proposed research leverage the WWF Network to sustain beyond the expected timeline?
- What is the relevance of your work?
  - What are the linkages of the proposed work to the national and regional food sector – its priorities, needs, and stakeholders?
  - How does the current/proposed research link to the Sustainable Development Goals and global agendas (for example, the Rio Conventions)?

## Selection Criteria

Finalists will be identified through a competitive selection process and scored based on a set of criteria including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Academic and professional contributions/potential: applicant’s commitment to their academic and professional development.
- Strength and quality of the research proposal: uniqueness of proposed topic, relevance, and detailed plan of action. The proposed work demonstrates an understanding of the fellowship’s rationale. The potential of the proposed research to provide a better understanding of the place-based nature of food systems and transformation and the proposed activities are feasible within the proposed work plan and realistic budget.
- Individual and collective impact: the applicant’s ability to succeed in conservation research and leadership; short and long-term impacts as well as lasting conservation outcomes beyond proposed academic/research timeframe. The proposed work aims to engage diverse stakeholders, including gender mainstreaming and involvement of local and indigenous communities. The applicant demonstrates potential to build partnerships and active engagement with local communities, academic, research, and practitioners.
- Project measurability: the proposed research has measurable outcomes and outputs.
- Collaborations: the applicant’s demonstrated potential to enhance partnerships beyond the proposed objectives and timeframe.
- Recommendation letters: the applicant meets the specific criteria for the fellowship with specific examples which demonstrate the applicant's abilities.

## Application Process

The call for applications will close on **December 18, 2024 by 11:59 PM US Eastern Time**. An overview of the grant timeline is below. The application is available [here](#).

- December 18, 2024: Deadline for submissions of applications in the portal
- January-April 2025: Selection process
- June 2025: Successful applicants informed
- July-August 2025: Contracts signed, and grants issued

## How to Apply

Applicants can access the online application and guidelines at [www.worldlife.org/efn](http://www.worldlife.org/efn). Applicants may apply in English, Spanish, French, or Portuguese. The application deadline is **December 18, 2024 by 11:59 PM US Eastern Time**. Please e-mail EFN at [efn@wwfus.org](mailto:efn@wwfus.org) for more information.